



Executive Summary

Introduction

Background

The adopted Center City – West Greenville Redevelopment Plan for the City of Greenville identifies specific goals and objectives geared to transform the Center City – West Greenville area into a livable and vibrant place – a regional destination and a place to live, work, and play. Central to these goals are the creation of city streets which are supportive of existing and future development.

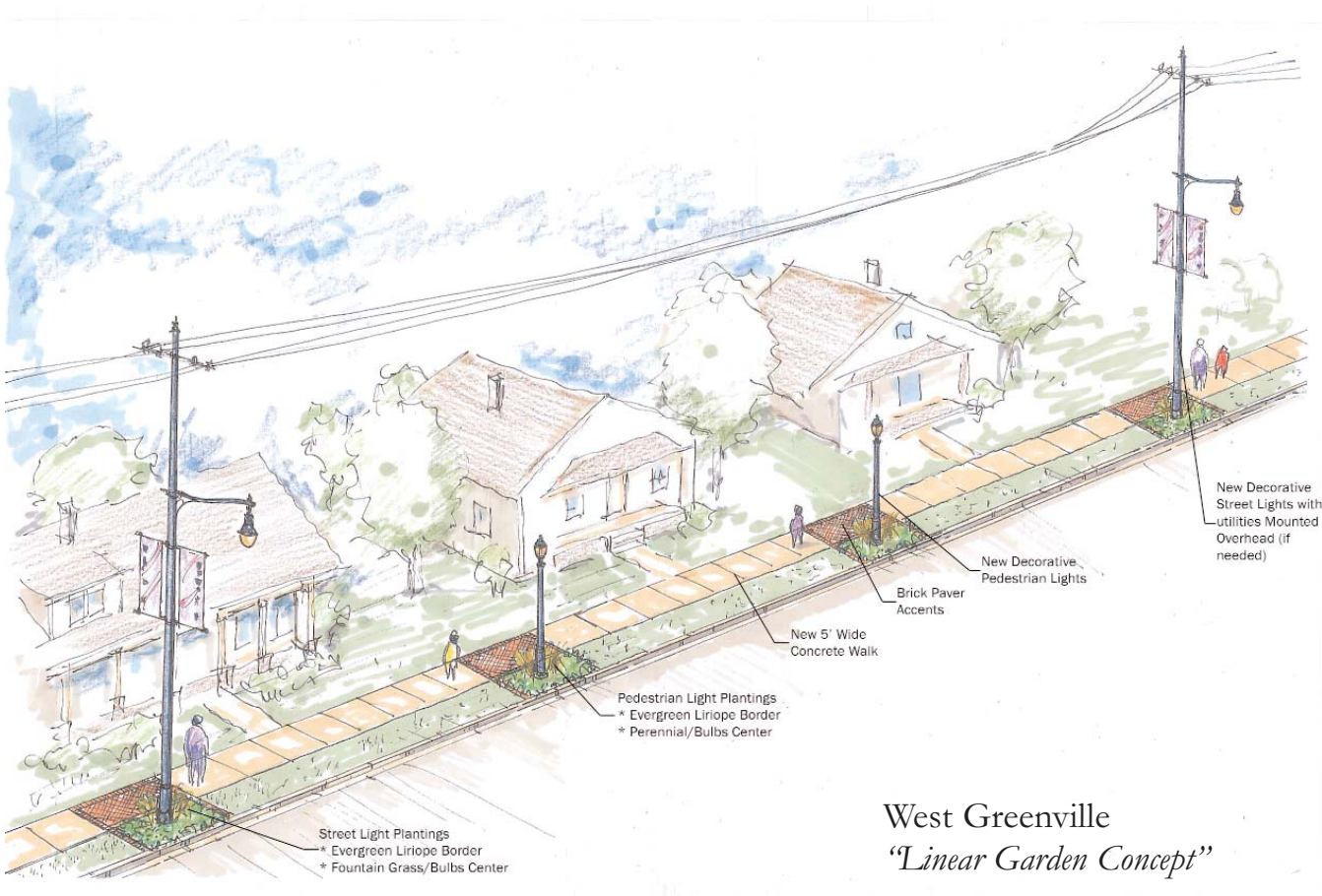
Center City – West Greenville Streetscape Master Plan

To address the vision identified in the City’s Redevelopment Plan the City with its consultants—Urban Resource Group and CitiArts—prepared this master plan to guide future streetscape improvements. The Center City – West Greenville Streetscape Master Plan honors the Redevelopment Commission’s vision while providing specific guidance for Greenville’s streets and streetscapes. Extensive interaction with the City staff and the citizens was key in the development of the plan. Multiple small group meetings, open houses, and other more specialized meetings with stakeholders set the ground work for the designs within this plan. The Center City – West Greenville Streetscape Master Plan covers the 566 Acre area designated in the Center

City – West Greenville Redevelopment Plan with a focus on four major street corridors.

- Evans Street (from 10th Street to Reade Circle)
- MLK Drive/East 5th Street (from Memorial Drive to Reade Circle)
- Dickinson Avenue (from Atlantic Avenue to Reade Circle)
- Cotanche Street (from East 5th Street to Reade Circle)

This is a policy document that establishes the City and its Citizen’s official vision and recommendations for future streetscape construction improvements to the streets and sidewalks in the Center City – West Greenville area. This plan is not an ordinance or zoning regulation. The plan itself does not change the zoning of a property, nor does it contain development suggestions for a specific project. Rather, this plan is an official document used to guide future City development decisions as they relate to streetscape improvements; development policies; public infrastructure improvements; and evaluations for future development proposals. The plan also provides development guidance to landowners, citizens, and developers in the Center City – West Greenville area.



West Greenville
“Linear Garden Concept”

Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles and Vision Statement are based on citizen input and were formulated during the public involvement process for this plan. They are the foundation upon which the Center City – West Greenville Streetscape Master Plan has been developed. These principles can also provide guidance in interpreting the recommendations of this plan.

Citizen’s Vision Statement:

The City of Greenville is a place that is:

- Alive
- Safe
- Beautiful
- Well lit
- Walkable

Guiding Principles

For Uptown and Tobacco Warehouse Districts

- Street trees – Add landscaping that makes the harsh city environment a nicer, more inviting place to be.
- Utility Improvements – Remove all unsightly overhead utilities. Convert all traffic signals to mast arms.
- Street Lighting – Improve the lighting levels by meeting a consistent standard of lighting level throughout the Center City. Provide a unified street lighting appearance.
- Street Furnishings – Provide for small scale experiences while improving the day to day movement of pedestrians along the streets of the Center City.
- Pedestrian Safety – Provide adequate sidewalk widths, well marked crosswalks, and appropriate surface materials that are distinctive and unique to the Center City districts. Narrow streets to naturally calm traffic and ease pedestrian crossings.

For West Greenville neighborhoods

- Street Lighting - Improve the lighting levels by meeting a consistent standard of lighting level throughout West Greenville. Special attention should be given to

the residential scale of the lighting so as to not create light pollution providing appropriate lighting for security. Lighting elements should assist in providing a unified street lighting appearance.

- Transit Improvements – provide access to and shelter at all transit stops along the MLK Drive Corridor.
- Pedestrian Safety - provide adequate sidewalk widths, well marked crosswalks, and appropriate surface materials that are distinctive and unique to the historic nature of the West Greenville neighborhoods. Narrow streets to naturally calm traffic and ease pedestrian crossings.
- Street trees – Add landscaping in keeping with the natural environment and historical nature of the West Greenville neighborhoods.
- Improved Sidewalks – Provide new sidewalks not only along MKL Drive but those streets leading to this major neighborhood transit corridor.



Community Benefits

Communities that invest public funds into streetscape projects typically see a financial return over time. In recent years, many of Greenville’s neighbors including Raleigh and New Bern, have embraced this approach, and are currently undertaking public improvement projects for their downtown streets. Streetscape investments bring a number of tangible benefits to citizens. At the most basic level, they are indicators of civic pride and help transform the downtown into an attractive public amenity for all to enjoy. Secondly, these improvements lead to

increases in the overall tax base by stimulating sales for existing businesses, helping to attract new investment to the improved area, and ultimately by increasing property values.

Master Plan Districts

Streetscape improvements also can be an avenue to creating a brand identity for a downtown area. This is accomplished though seemingly opposing values: Uniqueness and Consistency. Uniqueness in a downtown environment means creating opportunities to enhance those aspects of Greenville that set it apart such as its rich history: specific examples of this include its history as a tobacco center, its ties to the Tar River, its deep roots in the education and medical fields, and its place in the history and development of Eastern North Carolina. As part of the development of this plan three unique districts were defined.

- *The Uptown District* – The historical downtown of Greenville that is surrounded by historic neighborhoods, a major university, and the riverfront along the Tar River. This area was referred to by the citizens as the “Classic Downtown.” Evans Street would serve as its gateway and be celebrated as the “Avenue of the Arts.” Civic art should be a predominant feature of the streetscape, and the street itself should take on the character of a classic great urban street. This combined with the Museum of Art and the proposed Performing Arts Center would make this corridor a destination not only for residents but for the region as well.
- *The Tobacco Warehouse District* – Centered on Dickinson Avenue this district builds upon the rich history of the tobacco industry in Greenville. Period tobacco warehouse architecture sets the stage for a unique arts and entertainment district. The character of this street would be truly unique as a place for local artists to congregate and practice their crafts. Rotating art parks can be constructed to showcase these local artists and their works. An outdoor plaza would be created to provide opportunity for outdoor art shows and markets.
- *The West Greenville Historic Neighborhood District* – The original “suburbs” of Greenville are now home to several historic neighborhoods. The rich history of the early development of Greenville and its people are celebrated throughout the corridor with multiple memory markers centering on the role that African Americans played in the history of the development of Greenville. “Memory Markers” denoting Professor C.M. Eppes, the Negro Midwives Association, and the historic Albemarle Black Business District are placed at prominent locations along the MLK Drive corridor.



This Master Plan also integrates multiple civic art opportunities to create and celebrate the uniqueness that is Greenville. As part of the Civic Art Plan, historical research was done as well as an oral history session conducted to mine the uniqueness of the streets and districts of Greenville. These memories and stories of Greenville’s past will be visually celebrated as “memory markers” along the project corridors. These markers can be in the form of formal or contemporary art projects. It also sets the framework for a citywide civic art program and demonstrates a number of unique ways and ideas to engage the public and local artists to create Greenville’s “artistic palette.” This addition of civic art to the streetscape allows for Greenville to celebrate its past while looking forward to its future.



Carolina and their streetscape program. Each year a set amount of money is allocated to streetscape improvements. Year to year the money available varies so the program is tailored to meet the money at hand while not sacrificing the integrity and level of streetscape enhancements. Over time, the streets of New Bern have been converted to the charming place that they are today. This small project approach is particularly appropriate in business districts where some customers tend to avoid the construction zone, a practice that impacts the livelihood of business owners and their employees. While orange barrels and traffic detours are to be expected during construction, it is imperative that reasonably convenient and safe pedestrian access routes to all businesses be maintained at all times during construction. This is the first criteria for developing a phasing plan. The criteria are listed below:

- Maintain reasonable convenient and safe pedestrian access to establishments during construction.
- Provide reasonable convenient and safe detour routes for vehicular traffic.
- Coordinate schedules for compatible utility upgrades.
- Coordinate schedules for compatible improvements to adjacent private and public properties.
- Consider streetscape investments as key catalysts for some private investments that otherwise would have been delayed by property owners.
- Account for project phases requiring more advance planning and permitting (i.e. NCDOT).
- Advance projects that require less right-of way acquisition early in the phasing.
- Time construction to minimize disturbances (i.e. school season).
- Take advantage of available funding as it arises.
- Take advantage of opportunities with local artists or other art agencies and their funding programs.

Consistency in a streetscape is also important to create a specific theme for Greenville. Consistency in the basic streetscape design elements creates a natural rhythm and flow to the street corridors that allow for visitors and residents alike to have an enjoyable experience and want to come back again and again.

Implementation Program

Purpose

The purpose for recommending phasing and prioritization of projects is to provide a rational approach to the sequence of projects that will lead ultimately to the completion of the planned streetscape program.

Criteria

Municipally funded streetscape improvements are typically built in stages, block by block. This is as an alternative to an all-at-once downtown-wide approach. An example of this building block approach is the City of New Bern, North

Priority Projects

The following are recommended phasing of priority projects within the project area. These are not intended to be the actual final sequence of construction and should be evaluated yearly as construction money and other partnering opportunities arise.

Priority 1 – Evans Street (3 block section from 10th Street to Reade Circle)

Noted as THE major streetscape priority for creating the gateway experience to draw people into the Uptown District in the Center City – West Greenville Redevelopment Plan. This project has a number of issues that need to be addressed as part of it. Many of which need to be addressed before the 10th Street Project reaches design.

- It has the largest of the ROW acquisitions for it to reach its ultimate cross section.
- The 10th Street Connector project plays a major role in its construction sequencing. Due to this it should be considered as part of the 10th Street





project.

- It has a large civic art piece that needs to be commissioned and constructed.
- There are several major redevelopment projects slated for the corridor.

Priority 2 – MLK Drive (3 block section from Memorial Drive to Nash Street)

This section serves as the gateway to the West Greenville Neighborhoods from Memorial Drive. It also sets the stage for the City’s new housing redevelopment projects and provides the first major memory marker opportunity for West Greenville with the Eppes Memorial. This section is not affected by the 10th Street Connector Project.

Priority 3 – Cotanche Street (1 block section from E. 5th Street to Reade Circle)

This small section lends itself to a pilot project in Uptown due to its size and opportunity for a civic art piece. This section is not affected by the 10th Street Connector Project.

Priority 4 – Dickinson Avenue (4 block section from Atlantic Avenue to Reade Circle)

This section should be done as a whole as it sets the character for the entire redevelopment of the Tobacco Warehouse District. However, there are some conflicts with the final 10th Street Connector project that need to be resolved prior to design and construction in addition to some minor ROW acquisitions.

Priority 5 – MLK Drive/E. 5th Street (5 block section from Pitt Street to Reade Circle)

This section along with Evans Street serves as the crossroads of Uptown originally known as “Five Points.” An opportunity for a major urban park or parking deck makes this a prominent street to be developed. The 10th Street Corridor project would need to be in place and functioning to make the improvements recommended in this plan.

Priority 6 – MLK Drive (4 block section from Nash Street to Tyson Street)

This section would allow for the realignment of the offset Tyson Street intersection thereby increasing the safety level for pedestrians and automobiles alike. It is also in proximity to the possible redevelopment site of St. Gabriel’s Church into a community resource center and the memory marker opportunity for the Negro Midwives Association. This alignment could possibly play heavily into the completion of the 10th Street Connector project.

Priority 7 – MLK Drive (2 block section from Latham Street to Railroad)

This intersection would realign the intersection of MLK Drive with Elizabeth Street and Albemarle Avenue. This realignment would allow for new infill development to occur as well as the creation of a small neighborhood park/open space. This new intersection would serve as the major gateway into West Greenville.

Priority 8 – MLK Drive (2 block section from Tyson Street to Davis Street)

This section of MLK Drive would support new redevelopment along this section of the corridor.

Priority 9 – MLK Drive (3 block section from Davis Street to Latham Street)

This section of MLK Drive would support new redevelopment along this section of the corridor.



Priority 10 – MLK Drive (1 long block section from Railroad to Pitt Street)

This section of MLK Drive would support new redevelopment along this section of the corridor. It could possibly be done in tandem with the redevelopment of the Imperial Tobacco Warehouse site.

Other smaller projects

If funding for larger projects is not available smaller pieces of streetscape elements can be constructed with funding available. These are projects of opportunity and should be done if they are appropriate and have the backing of the community.

- Street lighting improvements
- Utility upgrades
- Drainage improvements
- Sidewalk improvements
- Memory markers and other civic art opportunities
- Wayfinding signage

